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PEFC Certification System Netherlands - Scheme Description

PEFC Netherlands

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1 Foreword

The document "PEFC Certification System Netherlands – Scheme description" has been developed by PEFC Nederland. The document was adopted on 22 december 2011.

PEFC Netherlands is the Dutch national governing body of the PEFC Council and incorporates representatives of forestry, wood processing industry and other stakeholder groups.

2 Annotation

This document is the part of the PEFC Certification System Netherlands that is valid on the territory of The Netherlands. It describes relations and linkages of actors participating in the certification process, scope, forms and tools for the assessment of sustainable forest management and credible transfer of information on the origin of forest raw material to the products. Fulfilment of the requirements and procedures of the PEFC Certification System Netherlands is the main precondition for labelling products by the PEFC logo. The PEFC logo gives assurance to the consumers that the labelled products originate from sustainably managed forests products or promote sustainable forest management.

3 Introduction

Certification is a tool for ensuring environmentally responsible, economically viable and socially beneficial forest management. The PEFC Certification System Netherlands meets all fundamental PEFC principles and requirements and, therefore, it is equal to the other national certification systems endorsed by this program.

PEFC is leading and largest program for sustainable forest management in the world. PEFC certification represents a transparent system of assessment of forest managements and it is a tool for tracing the origin of forest based products from harvesting, through their processing to the final product.

4 Scope

This document provides comprehensive information on the nature of forest and chain of custody certification. It defines basic definitions, elements, procedures, tasks, authorities and relations between actors participating in the certification process as defined in the PEFC Technical document.

This document is valid for organisations and management of certification of sustainable forest management and chain of custody in The Netherlands and is publicly available.

5 Definitions and abbreviations

5.1 Definitions

Accreditation body: body that performs accreditation (STN EN ISO/IEC 17000, 2.6)

Accreditation: third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks (STN EN ISO/IEC 17000, 5.6)

Audit data: parameters, on the basis of which it is possible to assess a character of changes or fulfilment of requirements, providing they are periodically monitored or assessed.

Audit evidence: records, statements of facts or other information which are relevant to the audit criteria and verifiable (STN EN ISO 9000, 3.9.4)

Audit findings: results of the evaluation of the collected audit evidence against audit criteria (STN EN ISO 9000, 3.9.5)

Audit plan: description of the activities and arrangements for an audit (EN ISO 9000, 3.9.12)

Audit report: report including the results of compliance of activities with the requirements of criteria. The report focuses mainly on the identification of nonconformities between the actual state and criteria requirements.

Audit team: one or more auditors conducting an audit, supported if needed by technical experts (STN EN ISO 9000, 3.9.10)

Audit: systematic, independent, documented process for obtaining records, statements of facts or other relevant information and assessing them objectively to determine the extent to which specified requirements are fulfilled (STN EN ISO/IEC 17000, 4.4)

Applicant: forest owner/manager, organisation or a group of forest owners/managers, organisations and other entities, which is subject to audit.

Auditor: person with the demonstrated personal attributes and competence to conduct an audit (STN EN ISO 9000, 3.9.9)

Certificate (of conformity): document issued in accordance with the rules of certification system confirming that the defined product, procedure or system meet determined requirements.

Certification body: independent third party assessing and certifying organisations against forest management or chain of custody standard or other documentation required within the system.

Certification: third party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons (STN EN ISO/IEC 17000, 5.5)

Certified forest: forest area for which a certificate has been issued by a certification body.

Chain of custody certificate: certificate confirming the origin of forest based products. Producers or retailers, who are holders of this certificate, can prove that raw material used in product originates from certified forests.

Chain of custody of forest based products: all changes in ownership of forest based products and changes in products during the harvesting, transportation, processing and distribution chain from the forest to the end-user.

College of Appeal: body dealing with appeals against decisions, disputes and complaints.

Community: person, body or stakeholder group, independent from the participants in certification, whose activities are affected by SFM.

Consensus: general agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting agreements. Consensus need not imply unanimity (ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996).

Criterion: requirement against which the actual status is assessed.

Environment: Surrounding in which an organisation operates; including air, water, land, flora and fauna.

Forest management certification: procedure for conformity assessment of forest management in relation to the criteria identified in the forest management standard.

Forest manager: physical or legal entity managing forests on the basis of ownership, governance or tenancy rights.

Forest owner: entity with the ownership rights to the given forest land who is authorised to hold, use, utilise its products and utilities, and dispose of this property.

Group certification: forest management or chain of custody certification of a group enterprises that are awarded one common certificate.

Interim revision: When PEFC standards at national level are amended, all amendments shall be communicated to the PEFC Council that will assess the changes

Internal audit: systematic investigation carried out by the applicant for certification or authorised organisation with the aim to determine whether the activities and corresponding results comply with the respective standard and whether they are appropriate for meeting the determined objectives.

Lead auditor: qualified person needed for the management and performance of audits.

Nonconformity: non-fulfillment of a requirement (STN EN ISO 9000, 3.6.2)

Normative document: document including rules, regulations or parameters for particular activities or corresponding results – standards, technical specifications, working procedures and guidelines.

Organisation: company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private, that has its own functions and administration (ISO 14050, 1.4).

Participant in group certification: applicant participating in the process of group certification.

Periodical revision: complete revision of standards within an exactly defined time period that allows incorporating the latest knowledge into standards and their adaptation to the local/regional conditions.

Revision by the PEFC Council: when the PEFC Council revises its procedures on standard setting and implementation, PEFC Netherlands will inform the PEFC Council on the subsequent revision of the Dutch PEFC Standard.

Stakeholder: An individual or group of individuals with a common interest concerned with or affected by operation of an organisation.

Standard: document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context (EN 45020, 3.2)

Surveillance audit: on-site audit, but is not necessarily full system audit.

Sustainable forest management: The stewardship and use of forests and forest land in a way and at a rate that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential in order to fulfil now and in the future relevant ecological, economic and social functions at local, national and global levels and does not cause damage to other ecosystems (MCPFE).

Certification system/scheme: system of standards, guidelines and rules referring to the criteria for forest management, chain of custody requirements, certification arrangements and requirements for certification bodies.

Technical expert: person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the audit team (STN EN ISO 9000, 3.9.11)

Third party: person or body that is recognized as being independent of the parties involved, as concerns the issues in question (ISO 14050, 1.6).

5.2 Abbreviations

CoC	chain of custody of forest based products
FMU	forest management unit
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGB	National Governing Body
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PEFC	Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes
PEFCC	PEFC Council
PEOLG	Pan European Operational Level Guidelines
PCSN	PEFC Certification System Netherlands
SFM	Sustainable forest management
TD	Technical document
UN	United Nations
EC	European Council
EU	European Union

6 Organisation of PEFC Netherlands

PEFC Netherlands is an independent voluntary professional association of legal entities with the aim to promote sustainable forest management and consumption of forest based products as a renewable resource worldwide and specifically in the Netherlands. It is the

Dutch PEFC National Governing Body (NGB). PEFC Netherlands is a member of the PEFC Council as of 8 August 2008

The objectives and activities are defined in the association's statutes.

The General Assembly of PEFC Netherlands, consisting of all members is the highest authority of the association.

The Board of Directors is the supreme managing body. The Board appoints the members of the College of Appeal. The Board reports to the General Assembly at least annually.

The National PEFC Forum is the standard setting body. The members have been invited by PEFC Netherlands for voluntary participation. To ensure a balanced representation of interest the Forum is divided into five interest groups.

- 1) Forest owners and forest managers
- 2) Processing industry (from harvest to end user)
- 3) Non-timber usage of the Forest (recreation, hunting)
- 4) NGO's (environmental organisations)
- 5) Employers and trade unions

7 Structure of the PCSN scheme documentation

The processes of the PEFC Certification System Netherlands are guided by documents elaborated in accordance with the PEFC Technical Document and its relevant mandatory appendices and other PEFC documents.

7.1 PCSN scheme documents

PCSN I	PEFC Standard Netherlands
PCSN II	Implementation of Forest Management Certification
PCSN III	PEFC ST 2002:2010 Chain of Custody of Forest Bases Products – Requirements
PCSN IV	Certification Procedures
PCSN V	Standard Setting Procedures
PCSN VI	PEFC ST 2001:2008 PEFC Logo Usage Rules – Requirements
PCSN VII	College of Appeal Procedures
PCSN VIII	PEFC Certification System Netherlands – Scheme description

7.2 Additional documents

PEFC Notification of Certification Bodies operating Certification in The Netherlands
Procedure – Aanvraag logo gebruik. (Procedure – Issuance of PEFC logo license)

8 Normative Reference for Development of Certification Criteria

8.1 Generally

Certification criteria cover all essential aspects of SFM. Certification criteria cover all range of forest functions including all economic, ecological and social functions. They directly follow the Resolution H1 "General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe" and H2 "General Guidelines for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of European

Forests” and reflect the structure of the six Pan European criteria that were adopted as the key principles for sustainable forest management. They contain elements of managerial and administrative systems that are necessary for the implementation and performance of SFM

8.2 National normative references

The PEFC Certification System Netherlands is based on the state of forestry in the Slovak Republic, its historical development, structure of ownership, forest management planning and information system in the area of forestry.

It relies for a great part on the Dutch laws and regulations. Specifically in the area of:

- a) forestry;
- b) environment, protection of nature, landscape and water resources;
- c) protection of ownership rights, social affairs and employees.

8.3 PEFC ST 1003:2010

Certification criteria used in the PCSN are based on PEFC ST 1003:2010 Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements. PEFC ST 1003:2010 provides the reference basis for the development and revision of the PCSN.

8.4 International ILO conventions

The fundamental ILO Conventions as amended have been ratified by the The Dutch State Government and implemented into the national legislation. Therefore, it is not necessary to cover them directly in the PEFC Standard Netherlands criteria.

Additional measures for health and safety in forestry are listed in the “Arbocatalogus Bos en Natuur”.

8.5 Other international conventions

The Netherlands as a signatory state has ratified and implemented other international conventions listed below into the national legislation:

EC directive on the conservation of wild birds (1979)
EC directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna (1992)
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
Convention on Biological Diversity
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats
Kyoto Protocol 1999

Requirements covered by these conventions relevant to forest management are included in the PCSN through the national legislation.

8.6 International standards

EN ISO/IEC 17021 Conformity assessment. Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

EN ISO 19011 Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing

EN ISO/IEC 17000 Conformity assessment. Vocabulary and general principles

EN ISO 9000 Quality management systems. Fundamentals and vocabulary

EN 45011 General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems (ISO/ICE Guide 65:1996)

9 Credibility and Independency

The PCSN credibility is based on the mutual independency of the three internationally recognised entities (standard setting body, certification body and accreditation body) that enter the process of forest management and chain-of-custody certification in relation to the applicant for certification. Their authorities, responsibilities and mutual relations are defined by the PCSN documentation.

10 Standard Setting Process

10.1 Standard setting process

The standard setting and revision process is defined by the normative document *PCSN V Standard Setting Procedures*. The standard setting and revision process is initiated by PEFC Netherlands. The (temporary) National PEFC Forum is established for the purposes of standard setting or revision. The National PEFC Forum composition provides for balanced representation of all stakeholders where no single interest is allowed to dominate the process.

The enquiry draft of the standard for sustainable forest management is subject to a 60 day public consultations. The aim of the Forum is in a transparent and open way to reach consensus. The work of the forum is documented and publicly available.

10.2 Periodical revision

The objective of the periodical standard revision is their ongoing improvement in the light of new scientific knowledge and practical experience.

The PEFC Standard Netherlands and appropriate associated documentation shall be periodically reviewed at least every 5 years according to *PCSN V Standard Setting Procedures*.

10.3 Revisions by the PEFC Council

All changes induced by PEFC Council shall be implemented in the PCSN scheme documents in the requested time period. PEFC Netherlands shall the PEFC Council on their implementation according to the specific instructions.

10.4 Transition period

Transition period for the introducing, information dissemination and training about the changes resulting from the periodical revision of PCSN documentation is 12 months from the application date at maximum.

For all certificates issued before the end of the transition period all changes have to be implemented by the time of their next surveillance audit.

11 Forest Certification

Ensuring the non-discrimination, voluntariness, credibility and cost-effectiveness of the process is the mandatory principle of forest certification. The following options or their combinations can be used for forest certification:

- a) group certification;
- b) individual certification.

Procedures for the group and individual forms of certification are defined in scheme document *PCSN II, Implementation of Forest Management Certification*.

The applicant, certified area and participating forest owners/managers and other actors shall be clearly indicated and defined for all alternatives of forest certification.

All participants of certification shall comply with the certification requirements as defined in *PCSN I, PEFC Standard Netherlands*. Rules and control mechanisms applied to ensure compliance shall be demonstrated during the PEFC endorsement and mutual recognition process and continue to be monitored by certification bodies.

All participants in certification are responsible for ensuring that contractor's activities and operations meet the respective certification criteria. The PCSN, as of yet, does not include criteria for contractors and rules for participation of contractors in group or individual certification.

11.1 Group certification

Group certification represents the most cost effective form of forest certification, that allows participation of all forest owners/managers regardless of legal form and size of forest property.

Group certification is being applied for by the group manager (the applicant) and allows access for the voluntary participation of individual forest owners and other managers of forests.

Individual forest owners and other forest managers can voluntary participate in the certification. Commitment of forest owners/managers to participate in certification is based either on the individual commitment of forest owners/managers or on the majority decision within an organisation representing forest owners/managers. Regardless of the form of commitment, the participation in certification is absolutely voluntary and forest owners and other forest managers can leave this process at any time.

Only the forests of forest owners/managers participating in the certification are considered as certified. The area of these forests is considered as certified area and raw material coming from these forests is considered as certified raw material.

All actors participating in the PCSN certification shall meet the criteria of PEFC Standard Netherlands that is PEFC endorsed and mutually recognised.

The applicant shall keep an appropriate register of individual forest owners and other managers participating in the certification.

Detail procedures are defined by the scheme document *PCSN II, Implementation of Forest Management Certification*.

12 Chain of Custody Certification and the PEFC Trademark

12.1 Chain of custody certification

Chain of custody certification is needed to create an information link between the raw material included in forest based products and the origin of that raw material. Chain of custody certification is required for the suppliers of forest based products who use declarations (including labelling) referring to the content of certified raw material in their products.

PEFC rules for certification and verification of chain of custody are defined in the international PEFC standard for chain of custody of forest based products. This international document is a part of the PCSN as the document PCSN III. This document defines requirements for chain of custody which the organisation shall meet if its declarations or labels referring to the origin of raw material used in the products sold or transferred is to be recognised as credible and reliable.

12.2 PEFC trademark

A common PEFC trademark and PEFC trademark logo have been registered and are owned by the PEFC Council.

The trademark and logo shall only be used under contract in accordance with the PEFC rules, as communication tools including the labelling of products, that come from forests certified under certification programmes recognised as meeting the PEFC requirements. Based on the contract with PEFC, PEFC Netherlands is a licence holder entitled to use the PEFC trademark in The Netherlands and, on behalf of PEFC, it is authorised to issue licences to the holders of forest management or chain of custody certificates.

PEFC logo usage rules are defined in the PEFC international standard *PEFC ST 2001:2008 PEFC Logo Usage rules – Requirements*, which is a part of PCSN as the scheme document *PCSN VI*. This document covers requirements for users of the PEFC logo relating to ensure accurate, verifiable, relevant and non misleading usage of the PEFC logo and related claims.

13 Certification Procedures

Certification and audit procedures applied within the PCSN are based on the international standard of system management or on product certification.

PCSN rules for certification and competences of certification bodies operating forest management and chain of custody certification are defined in the document *PCSN IV Certification Procedures*.

13.1 Certification body

Certification bodies are impartial and independent third parties that shall have appropriate technical competence in certification procedures, adequate know-how in forest management and forest products procurement and processing in general, respectively and shall have a good understanding of the certification criteria of national certification system.

Only those certificates are recognised by PEFC Netherlands which are issued by accredited certification bodies notified by PEFC Netherlands.

When certifying forests, the certification body assesses conformity of forest management with the criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management in the PCSN I PEFC Standard Netherlands and issues a certificate after the conformity has been confirmed.

When certifying chain of custody, the certification body assesses credibility in tracing the origin of forest based products against the requirements of PEFC ST 2002:2010 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements (PCSN III).

The tasks of the certification body include:

- a) conducting independent audits;
- b) issuance, suspension and withdrawal of certificates referring to the appropriate standards recognised by PEFC and informing of PEFC Netherlands about them;
- c) control of the use of forest management and chain of custody certificates and PEFC trademark.

13.2 Certification process

The process of forest certification is defined in the scheme document PCSN IV

14 Accreditation and Notification

Only those certificates of forest management and chain of custody issued by accredited and PEFC notified certification bodies are recognised by PEFC Netherlands.

PEFC Netherlands requirements for accreditation and PEFC notification are defined in the technical document *PCSN IV Certification Procedures* and the guideline *PEFC Notification of Certification Bodies operating Certification in The Netherlands*.

Accreditation of certification bodies operating forest management certification shall be based on ISO 17021 within the scope defined by *PCSN I PEFC Standard Netherlands*.

Accreditation of certification bodies operating chain of custody certification shall be based on EN 45011 (ISO Guide 65) within the scope defined by *PCSN III*.

Requirements for certification and accreditation of certification bodies operating certification of chain of custody of forest based products.

Accredited forest management and chain of custody certificates shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body.

15 Appeals, Complaints and Dispute Settlement

Each participant in certification process is entitled to appeals and corresponding process of complaints resolution referring to the certification process.

PEFC Netherlands has established a “College of Appeal”, which deals with those complaints that are outside the scope of the respective certification or accreditation body.

Rules of the national governing bodies for procedures of disputes settlement are defined in the document *PCSN VII College of Appeal Procedures*.

The certification body deals with the appeals, complaints and disputes referring to the process of certification and its results within the scope of accreditation.

The relevant accreditation body deals with the appeals, complaints and disputes referring to the accreditation process and fulfilment of accreditation requirements.